

REMARKS


Applicants note with appreciation that, in the Final Office Action dated August 9, 2005, claim 12 was objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. However, claims 1, 3, 6-9, 11 and 13-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Number 6,498,872 ("Bouevitch et al."). Furthermore, claims 2 and 10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bouevitch et al. in view of U.S. Patent Number 6,801,310 ("Kewitsch et al.").

In response, Applicants have rewritten the "objected to" claim 12 in independent form by amending the independent claim 9. As a result, claim 12 has been canceled. In addition, the independent claims 1 and 17 have been amended to include the indicated allowable subject matter. In view of the claim amendments, Applicants respectfully assert that the pending claims 1-3 and 6-20 are in condition for allowance. A notice of allowance is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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